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ABSTRACT

Differences in political attitudes, opinions, and responses toward the counter culture exist among educators of the right, the new and old left, and conservative, liberal and radical outlooks. Differences in response to student radicalism and dissent involve the function of the school system and its teachers, the nature of the students' role in the educational setting, and attitudes toward dissent. The conservative views the school as a system developed to disseminate academic knowledge, preserve the power status quo in the school, and preserve student-teacher differentiation. The radical sees the school function as facilitating creation of a better environment which incorporates school-community cooperation, promoting interpersonal relationships, and, further, assisting in development of a counter culture. To deal with conflict and change, the National Training Laboratory has emphasized several working principles: Administrators need to: 1) keep up with the facts and issues involved in the conflict; 2) open the channels of communication; 3) identify mutually-held goals; 4) encourage a non-violent approach; 5) act to meet the key issues in a reasonable, rational manner. (SJM)

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EDUCATOR RESPONSE TO THE COUNTER CULTURE

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Educators have varying opinions about the counter culture and students who lean in that direction. Some educators are sympathetic toward the counter culture; others are not. Their sympathy depends, in part, upon their own philosophy. It is possible to differentiate the assumptions and beliefs of the educators in a theoretical manner. Certainly, differences exist between educators of the political Right and those of the political Left. Differences also exist between the Old Left and the New Left and between conservative and more liberal and/or radical educators.

Differences Among Educators of the Right and the Left

A "conservative" educator is not necessarily a "right-wing" educator. A conservative is one who resists rapid change and urges caution. However, the "right-winger" and the conservative are both pessimistic concerning the possibility of achieving a utopian society. Left and Right are clearly divided on their assumptions about human nature. The issue has been called that of "faith in people." Nettler (1968) put it aptly: "The Leftist thinks people are better than they are; the Rightist thinks they are worse."

The man on the Left thinks people are basically honest and good. The man on the Right believes that man is basically dishonest and prone to corruption if not constrained by laws and institutions.

The Left believes that education should be provided fully to all who want it. The Right believes in rationing education and is opposed to "non-productive education." The Leftist emphasizes the need to cooperate in finding solutions to difficult problems. Right speaks of the value of competition in education. The Left wants government to do more to educate people. The Right wants people to educate themselves, arguing that it is only in this way that they will regard education as worthwhile and appreciate it.

Nettler (1968, p. 8) notes that when the Left and Right speak about civil liberties they have different things in mind:

The Leftist is a civil libertarian in those areas that will change the way things are: he is in favor of equality of public regard and service, and opposed to censorship and hard punishment of criminals. The Rightist is a civil libertarian in those areas that keep things as they are: he is in favor of constitutional guarantees of order and privacy and property rights.

Table I

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
POLITICAL LEFT VS. THE POLITICAL RIGHT

The Left

The Right

Assumes that people are better
than they are (Nettler, 1968)

Assumes that people are worse
than they are (Nettler, 1968)

Optimistic about achieving
Utopian society

Pessimistic about achieving
Utopian society

Education should be provided
to all who want it.

Education should be rationed.
It should be given only to
those who will use it and
appreciate it.

A civil libertarian in areas
that will change the way things
are (Nettler, 1968)

A civil libertarian in areas
that will keep things as
they are (Nettler, 1968)

Tend to be permissive educators

Tend to be strict educators

The Left thinks private property limits liberty; the Right thinks private property is its defence.

The Leftist is politically religious; the Rightist is conventionally religious. The Leftist emphasizes doing good; the Rightist emphasizes being good. The Leftist is a permissive parent and educator; the Rightist believes in discipline. The Leftist encourages the expression of emotion, feeling, wish and dream; the Rightist encourages reason, bounds and limits. The Leftist talks about "right" (no pun intended) while the Rightist talks about duties.

And so it goes--Left and Right--a difference that meets at the ballot box--and on the battlefield.³

The Old Left vs. the New Left

It is naive to think that the conflict in the schools today is a simple reflection of the differences between Left and Right, Conservative and Liberal. For one thing, the Left is itself split on matters of philosophy as well as tactic and strategy. A review of the difference between Old and New Left may assist the reader in understanding the tensions existing in the Leftist camp.

Although Feuer (1969) viewed the New Left/Old Left schism as part of a recurrent generational conflict, Mauss (1971) felt that this was not the most useful way to regard the schism. A chronological generation is not necessarily coextensive with an ideological one (Mauss, 1971, p. 3). Mauss pointed out that there are several New Left activists and theoreticians who are in their fifties such as Marcuse, Dellinger, Goodman, Paul Jacobs, Staughton Lynd, and C. W. Mills.

Mauss (1959) reported that the New Left had its origins in the civil rights movement of the later 1950's and became the New Left because of a disenchantment with the Old Left which had become irrelevant, or which was regarded as having died or as having sold out. Not that there were no radicals in the Old Left, but earlier Leftists had been shunned by the labour unions and by the American public. Gradually the Old Left was forced into isolation by the entrepreneurial class and its allies. In spite of a minor resurgence in the 1930's the Old Left never made a lasting impact on the political and economic systems of the United States or Canada.

In order to understand the New Left, one must realize that its social origins are predominantly bourgeois rather than proletarian, and student or ex-student rather than worker. This has resulted in striking differences between the Old and the New Left regarding general orientation.

The "manifest motivations" of the Old Left were economic self-interest and economic justice. The New Left, with its membership composed of students and ex-students reared in the upper middle class, was more interested in obtaining conditions of general social justice. Economic interests seemed to have little to do with New Left activity. The Old Left took up the concerns of the working-class, whereas the New Left has identified with the have-nots, drop-outs, ethnic minority groups, students and inhabitants of the ghetto who remained poor even after the unions got a better deal for the worker.

The political positions of the Old Left and the New Left differ in many ways. The New Left stresses individualism, whereas the Old Left stresses a need for collective action. The New Left is more reformist than Marxist, more present-oriented than future-oriented, less materialistic, less conscious of the need for security and more predisposed to spontaneous change than to using contrived or parliamentary means for achieving change. The New Left is also less ideological and promotes the use of "people power" rather than "political power." Power is ideally decentralized according to New Left thought. The power of government is recognized as legitimate by the Old Left who are more prone to accepting an impartial, centralized bureaucratic welfare state. The New Left has been more concerned about dehumanization, racism, and indifference to

Table II

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
OLD LEFT VS. THE NEW LEFT

Old Left

... Social origins: proletarian
(Mauss, 1971)

Motivation: economic self-
interest

Stress: the need for collective
action and central-
ization

Goals: Future - oriented

Politics: Emphasizes
"political power"

New Left

Social origins: bourgeois
(Mauss, 1971)

Motivation: obtaining con-
ditions of social
justice

Stress: the need for indivi-
dualism and decent-
ralization

Goals: Present - oriented

Politics: Emphasizes "people
power"

poverty than about poverty as a fact and in equality or exploitation of the working class. One of the most striking differences among Leftists is the New Left's insistence on the need to cultivate man's individually unique characteristics, and the Old Left's seeming fear and intolerance of uniqueness which verges on becoming anti-social deviation. These differences amount to the fact that there has been tremendous disagreement among Leftists concerning most educational issues.

The New Left and the Liberal Establishment

The showdown between liberal reformists and the arch-conservatives in educational circles was staged in the 1960s. Since then tensions have shifted to disagreements between the New Leftists and the "liberals" or "pseudo-liberals," who replaced the conservatives but didn't basically change the institutions they promised to reform. Most radicals view most liberals in power as conservatives in disguise. The radicals seek to expose the pseudo-liberals for what they regard them as, that is, self-concerned bureaucrats who are doing very little to democratize the educational system.

It is sometimes interesting to trace the discussion of an educational issue across the spectrum of political thought from traditional Right to traditional Left, to the more Liberal view and, from there, to the present emphasis

of the New Left. For example, take the issue regarding the desirability of employing collective action. The traditional Left thinks collective action and decisions regarding production are necessary in order to equalize the benefits of industrialization. The Liberal may think collective action is necessary but only when it occurs as a result of democratic consensus. Liberals are sometimes opposed to the communistic leanings of the Old Left. In the New Left we find a new assertion of the rights of individuals to associate and innovate without interference. At the same time, the New Left believes in the importance of group spirit and group action if meaningful reform is to be realized.

The New Leftist is set off from the establishment Liberal in other ways as well. The Liberal believes in the functional value of institutional structure. The New Leftist usually opposes any fixed structure especially if that structure cements administrative procedure. The Liberal is an equalitarian in many ways. The New Leftist is not so concerned about equal outcomes as he is about equalization of opportunity. What a person does with his opportunity is up to the individual. Liberals are regarded as "homogenizers" of community. New Leftists encourage diversity, emphasizing decentralization at the expense of bureaucracy.

Schweitzer and Elden (1971) have written an excellent summary on the New Left and its opposition of "corporate Liberalism." The New Left, they say, "stems from a perception

of the failure of corporate Liberalism, formal government, and special-interest bureaucracy to deal effectively with the needs and demands of the new post-war, post-industrial generation" (1971, p. 156). This failure probably results from the fact that the "value emphases in the new student Left are diametrically opposed to the value emphases of the dominant institutions established by corporate Liberalism. Gouldner (1970) describes some of the values of New Left students which are at odds with corporate Liberalism:

Far from being "materialists," these students (the New Leftists) are often deliberately "utopian" and activistically idealistic. The value emphases of the new student radicals center on equality and freedom, but they do not stop there. They also include disgust at affluence without dignity; desire for beauty as well as democracy; belief in creativity rather than consensus; wish for community and communal values, and vehement rejection of depersonalized bureaucracy; desire to build a "counter society" with "parallel institutions" and not simply to be integrated into and be accepted by the dominant institutions; hostility to what is conceived of as the dehumanization and alienation of a cash-nexus society; preference for individuated, intensely felt, and self-generated interpersonal style, including fuller sexual expression and experimentation. They

Table III

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
NEW LEFT VS. THE LIBERAL ESTABLISHMENT

New Left

Opposes fixed structure in
institutional organization.

Encourages diversity and
pluralism.

Not so concerned about
equal outcomes as equal
opportunity.

Attempts to create
"parallel" institutions.

Establishment Liberals

Believes in functional value
of institutional structure.

Encourages cooperation and
the need for commonly
accepted consensus.

Equalitarians in an
administrative sense.

Attempts to reform
institutions which
already exist.

want what they think of as warm human relations and a kind of "inventive sensuality," rather than the rational discipline of either the independent professions or the bureaucratic establishments (Gouldner, 1970. p. 399-400).

Conservative vs. Radical Educators

Amid the vast amounts of literature on student radicalism and dissent, few studies or reports have been produced which focus on the educator's response to these issues. Studies which have been reported normally deal with university problems. More recently, however, student dissent has reached the secondary school level and it is now necessary to review the responses of teachers and administrators who must cope with this dissent.

For purposes of illustration, we shall examine the positions held by two groups--conservative educators and radical educators. The assumptions of the two groups will be discussed with respect to three areas: the function of the school system and its teachers, the nature of the student's role in the educational setting, and attitudes toward student dissent.

The conservative believes that "school exists to preserve, extend and disseminate accurate knowledge" (Hoult, Hudson, Mayer, 1970). This belief assumes that the most knowledgeable members of

an educational community are those who have the most experience. It is also assumed that, by virtue of this knowledge, these members should largely control the environment in order to preserve its defined function. Conservatives might argue that the most knowledgeable members of the educational setting are assumed logically to be the most appropriate teaching staff.

A conservative takes the stance that a school should use all necessary means to ensure the regular operation of society while trying to eliminate anything which could potentially lead to a shift in power, or seriously threaten the credibility of the existing control or power structure. While the notion of resorting to physical force is repugnant to many conservative educators, it is felt that if illegitimate force is used to interfere with the normal operations of an educational community, legitimate force must be used to combat it. It must be ensured that power does not fall into the hands of those who instigated the disruption.

Another assumption frequently made by conservative educators is that a school has at its disposal a limited amount of resources. Therefore, it should be concerned only with the dissemination of strictly academic or occupational knowledge. This is not only to imply that the student's out-of-school or non-academic activity is unimportant, but that the school's energy should be directed primarily to academic or occupational concerns.

Another conservative assumption deals with the nature of education. Education is not something that is done to people: it is something they do to themselves. On the basis of this assumption, complaints of irrelevant classes, poor teaching, lack of meaningfulness are invalid. True education is a process of selection from within, not something inflicted externally.

From a conservative viewpoint, it is further felt that students are misled if they are taught that they can succeed in our society by adopting any other than the middle-class, protestant ethic values. Disadvantaged minority groups should not therefore, be given special treatment within the system because such privilege would lead them into a false view of reality.

Conservatives feel that any students who oppose or challenge the methods of the "most knowledgeable members" of an institution are wasting their time for two reasons. First, by virtue of their past experience and knowledge, teachers know what is important to learn and the best methods and environment for that learning to take place. Second, because students are only in a particular school for a limited time period, while many of the teachers remain in the same school for years, students would not be around to feel the long-term effects of their proposed changes.

One academic goal of Conservative educators is to establish an educational setting where accurate knowledge,

accumulated through historical experience, is directed toward the maintenance of a stable, harmonious society. The conservative faculty would hope to be in control of the system, although countenancing an appropriate degree of supplementary student decision-making power, thus assuring the system's ongoing harmony and the fulfillment of its ultimate function--the preservation, extension and dissemination of accurate knowledge.

From the radical perspective, the function of education is essentially: "Getting to know, on all the manners which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh, free thought upon our stock nations and habits" (Matthew Arnold as quoted by Louis Kampf, 1969, p. 9). Arnold does not see education as an end in itself, but rather as a means to facilitate the creation of truly free educational environment.

It can be noted that both conservative and radical factions are concerned with power. The conservative views ultimate control and power as an end in itself; the radical views power as a means to an end. A second distinction can be made. The conservatives view the educator as the "most knowledgeable member of a school system resulting from his past experience," but the radical view does not make the same distinction. To the radical, the teacher's contribution is to be a human catalyst for students' intellectual and

emotional growth.

With reference to the nature of the school system, the radicals assume that the stress should not be placed on professionalism, but rather on the development of individual natural talents and faculties; and that these should be developed at an individual pace and by individualized methods. Radicals claim that the present system rewards professionalism, and that professionals are overly concerned about their own social mobility.

The radical view contends that much militant activism on the part of the students results because they are being treated as an "invading horde" and not as the centre of the educational community. The requests they make are ignored because the establishment is made both deaf and blind by its own vested interests.

Basic to the problem of inadequate communication between the establishment and the student is the rigid distinction made between teacher and student. Kampf believes that the division between students, faculty, and administration has no place in any institution that claims to be primarily concerned with learning.

Radical educators view the question of irrelevancy seriously. They state that industrialism has destroyed the natural environment, thus giving rise to real (indeed desperate) collective needs. Needs such as housing, and community services, cannot be met by the present socio-

political structure because they contradict the profit-motive upon which our society is based. Radicals believe that: the students can see these pressing needs and are concerned; there are needs of society that warrant immediate attention; distinctions such as "student" and "teacher" prevent collective action designed to fulfill serious societal needs.

Due to the assumption that the above mentioned needs cannot be met by the present socio-political system, the radical educators see their aim as assisting in the development of counter culture. They feel that loyalties to human life rather than professionalism and national interest are prerequisite to the attainment of this necessary alternative. "Many students are engaged in an almost frantic search for alternative careers and for alternative models of consumption--for a way of life in which production is subordinated to human needs, and activity is not simply geared to production" (Kampf, p. 21).

Finally, in accordance with the perceived function of education (that of freedom and free-flowing knowledge), the overall academic goal of the radical is to promote "programs which will afford concerned students the opportunity to use the academy not for the production of professional competence and learned monographs, but for the production of democratic relationships with people" (Kampf, p. 25).

All educators, be they university or secondary

school teachers, have certain attitudes and perceptions concerning the nature of education, the function of the school system, the roles of student and teacher, and student dissent. Keeping these perspectives in mind, let us turn to an account of how these orientations manifest themselves in the behavior of those working in the secondary school system. Judging from a somewhat limited field experience, I must conclude that the main characteristic of all teachers (not administrators, just teachers) in dealing with student radicalism is an absence of overt action. The administration of a secondary school is publicly responsible to deal with any action taken by student radicals. Each administration is dictated to by two major factions each packed with their individual vested interests, the parents of the students, and the political hierarchy above them, namely the board of education and the provincial department of education. To be free from either direct or indirect pressure, from these factions, each administration must keep its school operating smoothly and without major disruption. Therefore, when student dissent takes the form of physical action, the administration is compelled to attempt to reinstate some semblance of harmony and order as soon as possible. Even when a protest involves a small minority of the student population, the smooth functioning of the school is disrupted. The individual teachers are not required to act. The onus is on the administration. Even if a group of teachers did decide

to act on some issue involved with student protest, any administrative action would take precedent. One must remember that the teacher in a school has a vested interest in retaining his job, and that any action straying too far from "administrative policy" may put his position in jeopardy.

The more conservative teachers tend to stand behind the administration. They view any radical activity as disruptive. They feel the sooner the administration can disband the group the better; so as to return to the day-to-day educational routine which has been disturbed. The conservative teacher does not feel compelled to act.

Some more radical teachers rationalize their non-action. Radicals sometimes state that any genuine student action should involve some initiative and organization, on the part of the students concerned, and this without the formal supervision or direction of a teacher. It is a creative learning experience for the student to initiate and carry out a piece of action on his own.

The conservative educator is probably surprised by the protest and convinced of the unreasonableness of those protesting. If and when he must react to the protest, he does little more than deal with the immediate problem that has precipitated the protest. Such a response centres on specific issues and tends to look to a solution for the precipitating cause without much direct consideration of long term implications. One would also have to consider as

conservative any approach that attempted to stifle, cut off, or muzzle protest. But many administrations have found that such responses only delay the day of showdown.

Fear, uncertainty, and unpreparedness seem to characterize the conservative educator. Rather than reject more liberal approaches, he never really considers them. He does not, in short, understand the reason or need for protest.

A more liberal educator is probably ready for some form of protest and willing to concede that those protesting may have reason. When protest occurs, and probably even before, a shrewd administrator will have already thought of alternatives to the existing procedures and policy. One way for the administrator to rationalize the use of alternative policies is to introduce them on an experimental basis.

Dwight Allen (1971) says: "One way to unfreeze our educational situation is to legitimize experimentation. We could do this by writing legislation that would authorize school districts to set aside 10 to 15 per cent of their present budgets for alternative schools, K-12, that would operate on a system of voluntary enrollment." Allen suggests that such schools could become community laboratories of experimental education, and that, in time, they might perhaps undergird more extensive movements to renovate our educational system.

The answer to most protest should not be sudden or unplanned. The advocate of conservatism is interested chiefly in quelling the protest. A man who suggests a program such

as that of Allen is interested in understanding, and then removing, the major factors causing the protest. But in order to entertain such an approach to the problem, an educator will have to have reflected upon the entire educational system; he must also be willing to experiment and try to find viable alternatives to present procedures.

The revolutionary educator will probably regard protest against the educational system as not only inevitable but desirable. He understands and is in sympathy with the protestors because, like them, he disagrees with the basic assumptions of our present school system "about what is necessary, human, or good; the treatment of the person, time, choice, energy, work, community, and pleasure" (Marin, p. 72).

Such a total rejection of the status quo permits of only one reaction, and Marin, I believe, reflects the reaction of a revolutionary educator when he says that "those who want to help the young must realize it cannot happen in the schools" (1970, p. 72). He seems to be saying what Illich (1971, p. 44) put even more directly and more positively: "I believe that the disestablishment of the school has become inevitable and that this end of an illusion should fill us with hope."

Whereas the conservative questions neither the process nor the goal of the educational process, the liberal is willing to question the process; the revolutionary questions and rejects both the process and the goal and would (though

Table IV

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF
CONSERVATIVE VS. RADICAL EDUCATORS

Conservative Educators

Schools exist to preserve, extend and disseminate accurate knowledge.

The most knowledgeable members of a community are those who have most experience. The most knowledgeable members of a community should control that community in order to preserve its defined function.

Resources are limited, so the school should restrict itself to the dissemination of knowledge.

The distinctions between administrators, teachers and students should be maintained.

Radical Educators

Schools exist to facilitate the creation of a better environment.

The teacher should be a human catalyst for learning. He does not necessarily have to be the most knowledgeable member of the community.

Education does not necessarily have to take place in the school. Educational alternatives and community resources should be utilized in addition to the school.

The distinctions between administrators, teachers and students should be reduced.

he may not) replace them with goals and methods which he feels are superior.

In spite of the fact that I have classified possible reactions to protest, no answer to protest is pre-packaged nor can a general pattern be applied to a particular problem. And, what is more, the most effective method of dealing with protest may well be a procedure that inculcates elements of all three approaches.

The best reaction to protest is not necessarily an eclectic and politically arrived at combination of all approaches. But I do suggest strongly that the team of people attempting to resolve the problems that led to conflict should be composed of people who represent each of these points of view. The contribution of each may well be not only useful but vital.

Recommendations on Dealing with Conflict and Change

People who advocate basic change of any kind challenge and threaten our institutions. Some people who do not understand change and who view those who demand change as destructive, are often made incompetent by fear. Those who are severely paralyzed by fear have a tendency to restrict themselves to immediate symptoms of change. This does little to alleviate the fundamental conditions which have led to the demand for change. Added to those who favor simplistic solutions are those who wish to exploit people's concerns.

These are the people who wish to gain fame and fortune by attaching themselves pretentiously to the "demand-for-change-bandwagon."

Social scientists have done considerable study and research on controversy and conflict and are now in a position to make some recommendations to persons who are involved in the process of social change. The knowledge we have about conflict and how to deal with it, should be translated to educators who are continually involved with dissent and demands for change.

Laboratories sponsored by the National Training Laboratory have emphasized several working principles relating to dealing with change and successful conflict resolution. First, the National Training Laboratory people stress that one must keep up with the issues involved in the conflict. Administrators can sometimes avoid polarization by attempting to keep controversies from becoming violent or destructive and by struggling to keep open the channels of communication between the antagonists. Administrators should enter conflicts not as partisans but in such a way that pressure is exerted on partisans to resolve their difficulties. "Conflict resolution specialists" point out to the partisans that many outcomes of the conflict are possible. One outcome is that both sides could gain something but without completely satisfying everyone. Another type of outcome is one in which people have been able to find a way to incorporate the goals

of both sides in a creative new solution not previously anticipated. This process has been described by N. P. Follet in Creative Experience (1951).

Another related principle for resolving conflict has to do with shared goals. Groups may compete for certain ends but share goals at another level. Labour and management both may want good schools, despite other differences. Ethnic groups may vie for position but share concern for health or other aspects of the community. Where mutually-held goals can be identified and accepted, there is apt to be a lessening of competition or the threat of violence. A slightly different way to state this principle is "functional correlation." This means collaboration only at the point of an operational interest or need. Catholics, Jews, and Protestants need not agree on creed in order to work together to keep a large industry from leaving the community.

Another thing to keep in mind is that, before attempting to enter into a conflict situation, the administrator must be sure of his facts. One cannot make wise decisions without understanding fully what conditions have led to the conflict.

Finally, a widely developing point of view, or orientation toward controversy, is that of nonviolence. Following Ghandi, this viewpoint asserts that evil should not be ignored, but should be confronted by resistance, in which no bitterness is held against the opponent but at the same

time one does not capitulate. The manner of confronting evil is through love and through suffering, if necessary; through receiving violence but never engaging in it. The theory is that anger produces anger, while love produces love. The sit-ins, protests against taking cover during civil defense drills, and Freedom Riders all illustrate various modifications of the non-violent approach.

One of the problems in handling controversy and conflict is that the specific situation one has to confront usually calls for action more or less specifically designed to meet the key or central issues. Usually caution and understanding is required to determine just how to respond in a way that will lead to a sound solution. Before deciding how to react in a confrontation situation make sure to consider how important the issues raised actually are. The conflict resolution specialist will need to consider the course and nature of the attack and the concerns and characteristics of the people directly involved. One should also consider the consequences of not doing something about an attack, recognizing that not acting may imply guilt or the truth of the change. One should try to find what motivation lies behind the changes made and talk directly with the attackers where possible. Finally, anyone who is trying to mediate a conflict between warring parties should develop and hold an attitude of reason and be careful to stick to the fundamental issues while keeping personalities out of the picture and employing criticism only as a constructive force.

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